

West Louisville Strategies for Success February 2015

This document illustrates the volume, alignment, coordination and intentionality of the numerous strategies undertaken by the Fischer Administration to invest in and improve West Louisville. Education, safe and healthy neighborhoods, better jobs, and physical improvements, such as improved housing and infrastructure, all must be a part of any sustainable solution. This document details a holistic approach, rather than a piecemeal effort, to drive change.

Based on our experience and national best practices, we focus our resources – human and financial – geographically, approaching revitalization one neighborhood at a time. Our limited resources can be better targeted, with the plans and results more visible, thus encouraging earlier successful partnerships with the private sector and community organizations.

We begin with education – our top priority for the entire city and for West Louisville – because we firmly believe it is the key to success for all residents. Louisville has made a commitment to increase the number of college degrees in our community by 55,000 by 2020, with an even more specific commitment to increase by 15,000 the college degrees in the African-American community by that same year. Achieving these goals should attract better economic opportunities and support better outcomes. “55K” is a collective impact model that calls upon every parent, faith leader, business, educational institution and community organization to own this goal.

National statistics and comparative data affirm that Louisville is a relatively safe city, yet this fact is of little comfort to those who have been victims of violence. Any life lost or impacted by violence dims the light of our community and limits our potential. We believe that every neighborhood should be one where citizens feel secure, supported and prepared for lifelong success. In pursuit of this goal, Mayor Fischer created the Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods with the goal of identifying gaps between need and resources and to push collaboration among public, private and non-profit partners to reduce and eliminate those challenges. This work is comprehensive; our response has not been to rely solely on increased police presence but instead to focus on ways to promote an increase in economic, social, and educational opportunities. This work has been heavily focused on West Louisville because data informs us that the preponderance of violence can be found there.

Our vision for Louisville is one where there is no “9th Street divide.” It is one where all people feel included and have equal access to opportunity, where parents expect their children to graduate from high school or college, or be involved in career-ready programs, and where our community has companies that are ready to receive them with good paying jobs.

Louisville Metro and its predecessors have been working on the set of challenges in West Louisville for more than a decade, and Louisville Magazine’s March 2013 story highlighted the community need for attention. The issues in West Louisville are so broad and so complex, that Leadership Louisville also got involved, by dedicating its 2014 Bingham Fellows class to West Louisville through its program entitled “Investing in a Path to Prosperity.” Louisville Metro employees, private institutions and community stakeholders came together during the course of a year, studying data, programs and potential outcomes in West Louisville. Three programs were a result of the Bingham Fellows work: the creation of OneWest – a nonprofit community development organization focused on the physical surroundings and infrastructure in West Louisville’s nine unique neighborhoods; We Hire Together – a network of West Louisville community connectors to help connect job seekers to employers; and Early Education 40210 – a program to establish 40 frontyard Little Libraries to

increase children's access to books and kindergarten readiness. Forward movement has already occurred with One West establishing its Board of Directors and receiving a \$10,000 challenge grant from UPS, and there are 20 Little Libraries in place with 20 more coming in 2015. These programs provide a framework for Louisville Metro to work with the community and create momentum on initiatives and programs that would take longer and be more difficult if any one entity worked on them alone.

As a government we are committed to working with stakeholders and across agencies to address the issues in a systemic manner to ensure better outcomes. We also work to build a more cohesive connection between those who work on economic development and those who work to empower those most in need, i.e. community development, because there is no sustainable comprehensive West Louisville strategy or vision that does not include both. We deliberately employ a people strategy **and** a place strategy. In recognition of this commitment, in 2014 Louisville Metro Government reorganized its economic and community development functions to bring them all together under one organization – Louisville Forward. Louisville Forward aligns the entire spectrum of economic development activities – business attraction/expansion/retention, business outreach and small business services, retail, international economic development – alongside all real estate, land use, and design activities. This move will allow Metro to systemically address historic challenges and accelerate progress.

This comprehensive set of strategies is designed to contribute to the sustainability and viability of work as we move West Louisville toward a shared **vision of prosperity**.

Education

Louisville Metro Government – Jefferson County Public Schools Commitment

In November 2013, Mayor Fischer and Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) Superintendent Dr. Donna Hargens entered into an unprecedented **Joint Commitment to Improve Education Outcomes** aimed at significantly increasing the number of children and young people who are:

- **Ready for School** – enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- **Successful in School** – graduate from high school ready for college and careers.
- **Prepared to Succeed** – enter college (postsecondary education) and complete certificates or degrees.

This “mutually accountable partnership” calls for collaborating on grant opportunities, improving and expanding “Learning Places,” which are sites/programs throughout the community that extend learning time for students, exploring more joint use of facilities, developing data sharing agreements that allow for high quality service delivery, and publicly reporting on progress.

Out of School Time

In late 2010, Louisville Metro Government (LMG), along with JCPS and Metro United Way (MUW), approved *YouthPrint*, a comprehensive plan for an out-of-school time (OST) youth development system. *YouthPrint* called for convening an *OST Coordinating Council*, where the founding partners – LMG, JCPS and MUW – could help create a coordinated system for the enhancement of youth services in Louisville. The partners work to bridge in-school and out-of-school time and to demonstrate that OST is a fundamental support in improving education outcomes. Strategies include: coordinating youth services and funding, making sure services are high quality, and increasing involvement of young people, their parents and caregivers, and the community. In 2012,

Louisville received a three-year Wallace Foundation grant to build the OST system, focusing on increasing quality and youth participation.

To support this work, Mayor Fischer has focused on better utilizing city agencies to provide afterschool and summer programming and services. The FY15 city budget includes \$800,000 to support programming and extended hours at the community centers. An additional \$1 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds have allowed the city to make critical capital improvements at all eligible CDBG community centers; improvements include interior renovations and exterior updates. The new programming funding extends community center hours of operation to accommodate teen-focused programs, as well as all equipment, supplies, staffing, marketing and other items needed to manage and produce enhanced schedules and programs. Dare to Care/Kids Cafés at eight locations provide more than 1,200 meals per day through the Summer Meal Program.

Following is a sampling of 2014 programming and results:

- *Kindergarten Countdown*: 1,070 children and 1,624 adults participated in events , 2,750 t-shirts & books distributed by LFPL, 283 children and 500 adults came to KC fair;
- *Metro Parks Healthy Summer Camps*: 9 sites – 436 participants;
- Converted *Baxter, Parkhill and Portland camp sites* to open programming and extended hours to reach more and older youth.
- *Jefferson Memorial Forest/Metro Parks – Louisville is Engaging Children Outdoors (ECHO) Initiative*: 343 students;
- Received 2-yr, \$42,295 grant from U.S. Forest Service, \$25,000 grant from National Park Service cost share grant (leveraging \$35,000 Metro budget enhancement for summer programming), and \$7,500 donation from Toyota Motor Manufacturing of KY to support Louisville ECHO
- *LFPL Summer Reading – preventing summer learning loss*: 44,142 children (birth-5th grade) participated; 25,309 (57.3%) completed (read at least 10 books); 15,434 participants (6th-12th grade); 3,210 (20.8%) completed (read at least 6 books and completed 2 activities);
- *KentuckianaWorks SummerWorks*: 2,181 teens participated; 680 low-income youth were prepared for work through work-readiness training, placed in jobs and coached through 7 weeks.
- *Louisville Metro Community Action Partnership Summer Meals*: 31 sites offered summer meals – 11,272 snacks, 9,469 breakfasts, and 24,304 lunches;
- *Five Community Centers* have wifi and three community centers have new computer labs, all of which are designated as official JCPS designated “Learning Places” that provide afterschool access to Study Island and Success Maker;
- In partnership with Dare to Care, Metro Parks served 13,000 hot dinners to young people 18 and under at eight community centers during the summer; and
- Distributed more than 1,000 TARC passes to provide free rides for youth to get to and from local youth programs and cultural attractions.

Cultural Pass

To address the experiential gap that often correlates with low income, Louisville Metro launched the new Cultural Pass for Children in 2014, allowing students to visit 21 of the region’s greatest cultural organizations for free during the summer. The pass, a collaboration between Metro Government and cultural partners to address the importance of arts education in Louisville, was suggested during the Vision Louisville initiative and admits one child/student (ages 0 through college) to 21 attractions as diverse as the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft to the Kentucky Derby Museum to Yew Dell Gardens. If the child is under 16, one parent or guardian also is admitted for free. The pass was one of

the 80,000+ ideas that citizens submitted last year as part of the Vision Louisville initiative, in which residents envisioned how the city should look, feel and flow over the next 30 years.

The punch-card passes were distributed at local Louisville Free Public Library branches and Metro Parks Community Centers. More than 51,000 passes were distributed in the pilot, 8,200 of which were distributed to children living in West Louisville. The top ZIP code for pass recipients was 40211 (Chickasaw and Parkland neighborhoods). The top 10 ZIP codes were:

1. 40211 (Chickasaw & Parkland) – 3,220 passes
2. 40216 (Shively) – 2,795 passes
3. 40218 (West Buechel & Appliance Park) – 2,142 passes
4. 40203 (Central Louisville including portions of Portland, Russell, Old Louisville, Smoketown and Shelby Park) – 1,955 passes
5. 40219 (Newburg & Okolona) – 1,925 passes
6. 40212 (Portland & Shawnee) – 1,913 passes
7. 40214 (Iroquois & Beechmont) – 1,873 passes
8. 40299 (Jeffersontown) – 1,825 passes
9. 40291 (Fern Creek) – 1,758 passes
10. 40272 (Valley Station) – 1,663 passes
16. 40210 (Algonquin, California, Park Hill) – 1,175 passes

The program was successful in getting children into well-known attractions such as the Kentucky Science Center and the Louisville Zoo as well as lesser-known attractions such as the American Printing House for the Blind Museum, Locust Grove, KMAC and Riverside – The Farnsley-Moremén Landing. Most venues experienced an increase in visitors – many of whom were making their first trip. The Zoo and Science Center each had a first time visitor rate of 47%. Conversely, Riverside experienced a much higher first-time visitor rate, at 95%.

The program also had an impact on the Library’s summer programming. A 16% increase in Summer Reading completers and a jump in children’s circulation occurred. These increases are being attributed to the Cultural Pass as the Library was the primary point of distribution.

55,000 Degrees (55K) and 15,000(15K) Degrees

55K is a community agenda to increase the educational attainment of our community. The simple goal is 55,000 more working-age adults with college degrees (15,000 associates and 40,000 bachelor's degrees) by 2020; **15K** is a specific initiative to make sure 15,000 of those degrees are attained by African Americans. The community, including government leaders, community-based organizations, business leaders, education leaders and philanthropy partners, has collectively agreed to further five objectives to help achieve the goals of 55K and 15K:

- Create and support a culture of college-going and completion: LMG has created College and Career Corners in Metro Parks Community Centers;
- Use the business community’s unique points of leverage to accelerate attainment: Mayor Fischer has encouraged businesses to join Degrees At Work;
- Prepare students for success in college, career, citizenship and life: Louisville Metro offers many activities through partnership with JCPS and the Louisville Free Public Libraries;
- Make postsecondary education accessible and affordable: LMG supports Metropolitan College and Community Action Program provides various scholarships; and
- Increase educational persistence, performance and progress: LMG assists its employees with degree attainment via a tuition reimbursement program.

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The 15K strategic plan is built around four strategic focus areas:

- Create buzz and awareness to drive college-going culture;
- Create partnerships to drive readiness and completion;
- Create programs to drive completion; and
- Create new infrastructure for 15K.

55K/15K Report Highlights for 2014:

- ✓ *More people in Louisville have college degrees than ever before – 41.5 percent.* Of the working-age African American population, 25.6 percent hold an associate degree or higher.
- ✓ *However, Louisville is not on track to hit the 2020 goals of 55,000 more degrees and 50% college attainment.* At the current rate of growth, we'll add 50,000 more degrees and 45% of the population will hold a college degree in 2020.
- ✓ *Post-secondary degree completions were level this year.* The number of undergraduate degrees completed almost reached 10,000 in 2014, representing a 13% increase in bachelor's degrees and a 26% increase in associate degrees over the past four years.
- ✓ *Data confirm the education system is only a part of the equation for a more educated population.* Louisville-area colleges have produced more than 37,000 degrees since 2010, but only 8,200 more people have degrees in the population. We will need to add 3,700 bachelor's degrees each year until 2020 to hit the 40% bachelor's and higher goal.
- ✓ *Great gains have been made in Louisville's public high schools.* More JCPS students are graduating. The JCPS graduation rate in 2014 was 79%, up 2.5 points. And the number of students graduating from all JCPS high schools has climbed to more than 5,800 students.
- ✓ *At 61 percent, more JCPS graduates are meeting state benchmarks to be college and/or career ready.* This represents a 30% point gain over 4 years.
- ✓ *Undergraduate college enrollment has declined 11% since a peak in 2010, losing over 7,400 students, most notably among adults and African Americans.*
- ✓ *While we're moving in the right direction along key trajectories, it is clear where gaps in the system are still a major cause for concern.* At the current pace, the 50 percent target won't be hit until 2030, and improvements in the education system alone will not make up the difference. In 2015, the 55,000 Degrees leadership and community partners must identify other key drivers that affect the Louisville population education attainment levels and develop strategies, with owners and action plans, to address them.

Cradle to Career Pipeline

Expanding on the real collaboration 55K has nurtured across organizations and institutions, Mayor Fischer has created a Cradle to Career initiative that takes a broad-ranging approach to build a skilled and savvy workforce, and to ensure all of our citizens, in every zip code, can succeed. Cradle to Career builds on the Greater Louisville Education Commitment goal, "to provide a world-class, seamless and coordinated education system that provides ample opportunities for developing creativity and creative thinking, skilled workers, engaged citizens and civic leaders." This philosophy recognizes that whether you are a baby in the cradle or a 50-year-old IT professional getting a new certification, you must be constantly learning if you want to succeed. It consists of four pillars: Kindergarten Readiness, K-12 Success, High School to Postsecondary Transition and Completion, and 21st Century Workforce and Talent.

Work plans, objectives and metrics have been developed for the K-12 and High School to Postsecondary pillars, and similar work is underway for the other two pillars. Metro United Way, leading the work on kindergarten readiness, set three goals: to increase the number of children in quality early childhood programs; improve the quality of our programs; and to help give parents and

caregivers the skills they need to be more involved in preparing their children for kindergarten. The Louisville Metro Office of Civic Innovation, with the help of KentuckianaWorks, is working to blend the work environment with the education environment, introducing more education into the work environment. To that end, the Office of Civic Innovation and KentuckianaWorks have identified the top 21st century careers for our community so that we can better inform our educators and parents about the career opportunities of the future. With a completed census of current internship opportunities, they are working to increase those opportunities.

Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods

All of our streets must be free from crime, and our residents and business owners must feel safe in their daily work and lives. This is the case for most of West Louisville, but there are some neighborhoods experiencing violent crime at a higher rate. In 2012, Mayor Greg Fischer created the Violence Prevention Work Group and the Office for Safe Neighborhoods. The goal of the violence prevention work is to create a framework to determine specific actions and parties responsible for those actions, which should ultimately lead to the consistent reduction or prevention of violence. In 2013, the city's first Blueprint for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods was released. The work is comprehensive and blends prevention, intervention, enforcement and reentry around five areas of concentration:

- Community and Family Building
- Education
- Employment and Economic Development
- Health and Social Wellness
- Juvenile and Criminal Justice

The Blueprint for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods framework is designed around the public health approach to prevention. Public health prevention strategies are typically categorized in three tiers. Primary prevention aims to prevent violence before it occurs; primary prevention strategies aim to develop skills in individuals that will allow them to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner. Secondary prevention strategies are those that aim to deal with the immediate effects of violence such as providing medical care to victims of violence and emotional support to those impacted by the violent act. Lastly, tertiary prevention strategies deal with the long-term effects of violence such as helping victims reintegrate into society by providing medical and support services that deal with the physical, mental, emotional, and social needs of victims and their families/friends.

Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Highlights of 2014:

- Received a \$226,400 grant from the James Graham Brown Foundation for the Zones of Hope project, supporting the Black Male Achievement initiative in Parkland, California, Russell, Shawnee and Newburg;
- Created an intervention for children exposed to violence by convening partnership between LMPD, JCPS and Metro;
- Received \$2.25 million in two grants for the Right Turn program to connect 500 youth (ages 16-19 years) to educational and employment opportunities and to an adult mentor;
- Provided Psychological First Aid Training to 60 community members;
- Received a \$300,000 Project Safe Neighborhood grant for two years to address violent crime in the Parkland neighborhood;

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- Received a \$40,000 grant from Partnership with Peace Education Program to provide conflict resolution training to youth, staff and community members in Metro Parks Community Centers;
- Selected to join the U.S. Department of Justice National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, which comes with a \$20,000 grant and technical assistance;
- Selected to join the American Institutes for Research “Youth Violence Prevention TTA Initiative”; and
- Formed a partnership between LMPD, JCPS and Community Services to improve communication to reduce suspension by addressing the issues of students exposed to violence.

Following the Blueprint’s framework, the Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods created 11 Work Groups which were charged with developing focused action steps to help us reduce violent crime and increase positive outcomes. The action steps developed by the Work Groups produced a comprehensive plan, called One Love, which will guide our Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods work.

One Love is an “all hands on deck” action plan, consisting of 13 goals and 42 initiatives, calling on everyone to take an active role to make Louisville a city of safe and healthy neighborhoods, where all citizens feel secure, supported and prepared for lifelong success. The primary objective of One Love is to reduce the number of violent deaths experienced by young adults and decrease the number of youth exposed to violence. The campaign will promote opportunities to help reduce violence and share stories of the great work taking place every day.

Goals of One Love:

Community Building

- See high levels of civic participation reflected evenly throughout Louisville Metro
- Map the leadership landscape in Louisville Metro in order to identify community connectors, pinpoint gaps in services and create better marketing of existing leadership development opportunities
- Increase community engagement and awareness of violence prevention efforts throughout Louisville Metro
- Create a faith-based violence reduction system in Louisville Metro

Education

- Assess current community programs to identify effective strategies and gaps in services to increase effective programs
- Provide resources and tools for parents and guardians to help their children succeed academically, socially and emotionally

Employment and Economic Development

- Build an infrastructure to promote business connections
- Develop strategies to connect job seekers to entry level opportunities and entry level opportunities to job seekers

Health and Social Wellness

- Adopt, support and promote a Louisville Metro-wide strategy for suicide prevention
- Decrease the number of overdoses throughout Louisville Metro by 10% by December 2016
- Decrease the number of youth using illegal substances throughout Louisville Metro by 2% by December 2016

Juvenile and Criminal Justice

- Assist in creating a climate in which residents, LMPD and LMPD officers have a more favorable relationship that includes increased trust and positive perceptions of one another through the promotion of legitimate, transparent and just exercising of LMPD officers' (discretionary) power during citizen-officer encounters
- Identify opportunities for three partnerships to implement evidence-based practices to improve identified outcomes for at-risk youth and returning citizens by December 2016.

Promoting Financial Stability

Promoting family financial stability is a key contributor to creating safe neighborhoods. Louisville Metro Department of Community Services has worked directly, and through the Bank On Louisville partnership, with six financial institutions and other area non-profits to ensure that West Louisville residents have access to financial education, mainstream banking services and other supportive asset-building resources. Since its launch in 2010, Bank On Louisville's financial institution partners have reported that more than 2,600 previously unbanked West Louisville residents opened checking accounts.

Between July 2013 and October 2014, financial education providers, through the Bank On program, have offered 419 classes to more than 6,200 participants (youth and adults) on topics such as budgeting, building credit, financial goal-setting, home equity, predatory lending and refinancing.

Between May and November 2014, Community Services launched a pilot project, in partnership with the Louisville Water Company, to provide supports to households in the Shawnee area who had past due balances and were at risk of having their water shut off. Funded through the National League of Cities, over 800 families were provided an opportunity to enroll in financial case management that included assistance with budgeting and a restructured payment plan that extended the time they had to pay their past due balances. At the end of the enrollment period, over 140 households had responded positively to the offer, with 17% fully engaging and completing a household budget. Although enrollment in the program is currently closed, 75% of those who participated continue to make on-time payments.

Health in All Policies

In early 2014, Louisville Metro's Department of Public Health and Wellness, under the leadership of Dr. LaQuandra Nesbitt, unveiled Healthy Louisville 2020 (HL2020), a comprehensive plan to significantly improve the city's health over the next six years. Improving our city's health will directly improve our quality of life, prosperity and competitiveness, and HL2020 is a roadmap to get us there. Data indicates that residents of West Louisville fare poorly in many health measures; the HL2020 report contains data on key health indicators such as local rates of cancer mortality, chronic disease, tobacco use, low birth weight babies and obesity. It lays out specific goals to improve health in Louisville by the year 2020. Some of these goals include:

- Decreasing the percentage of Louisville residents with no health insurance from 17% to 0%;
- Decreasing the lung cancer death rate in Louisville from 63.9 per 100,000 population to 57.1 per 100,000 population;
- Decreasing the percentage of Louisville adults who smoke from 32.1% to 29% and decreasing the percentage of Louisville adolescents who smoke from 14.8% to 13.3%;
- Decreasing Louisville's infant mortality rate from 7.5 to 6.75 per 1000 live births;
- Decreasing the percentage of Louisville adults who are obese from 29.3% to 26.4%, and decreasing the percentage of children who are obese from 24.2% to 21.8% for 6th graders and from 17.9% to 16.1% for kindergartners.

HL2020 makes specific policy recommendations to achieve these goals.

HL2020 also employs a “health-in-all-policies” approach to improve the city’s health. The approach considers the health ramifications of all government policy, particularly in such areas as community design and land use planning, housing, transportation, education, and fiscal sectors. The main focus of the health-in-all-policies approach is to put health at the heart of the public policy process and to further evidence-based policy making. Achieving a healthy city is easier when the entire community is surrounded by environments where the healthy choice is the easy choice. This means a city where, for example, new housing subdivisions have sidewalks that connect neighbors and invite folks to get out and walk. It’s a city where every resident of every neighborhood has easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables. It’s a city that gives people wishing to kick the tobacco habit help to do so. But it’s also a city that protects our children from new products like e-cigarettes and old practices regaining popularity, such as hookah use.

Economic Development

The city’s economic development efforts are guided by the goals of improving the standard of living and providing access to economic opportunity for all in our community. The work accelerates results by focusing on competitive advantages. In West Louisville these include strategic location and available workforce, however much of this workforce is unskilled or underprepared for 21st jobs. West Louisville suffers from other disadvantages, including negative perceptions of the area (crime and unfriendly business environment), lack of available land for building and expansion, and actual crime data. These advantages and challenges were first clearly defined in the West Louisville Competitive Assessment and Strategy Project completed by ICIC (Initiative for a Competitive Inner City); specifically, the ICIC report recommended land assembly, business development services, and changing the reputation of West Louisville. While this report was initially published in 2001, its guiding principles remain relevant today. The recent Advantage Louisville strategic plan completed by Greater Louisville Inc. affirms the core assertions and action items of the ICIC report.

For the last three budget cycles, Mayor Fischer has included significant investments each year toward land acquisition in West Louisville, and the Department of Economic Development has actively pursued high-value users for these properties. Led by the Mayor’s Office, West Louisville scored a major success in March 2014 with the announcement of a retail shopping center, anchored by Wal-Mart, at the corner of 18th and Broadway.

Another major success, the West Louisville Food Port, was announced in September 2014 and will be developed at 30th and Muhammad Ali, replacing a former tobacco manufacturing facility with businesses that aggregate, distribute, process and store food sourced from our region. This facility will bring \$58 million in investment and 250 permanent jobs (and 275 construction jobs) to West Louisville neighborhoods and will offer community programs, neighborhood gathering space and retail opportunities.

The city has rolled out new marketing materials that were created from on-the-ground work with West Louisville business owners, residents and community stakeholders that highlight West Louisville as a great place to live and do business. The city’s economic development activities include dedicated staff resources for West Louisville small businesses and additional resources benefitting West Louisville business growth under the business cluster strategy and export initiative.

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The city also has pursued other neighborhood specific strategies. The Park Hill Industrial Corridor Implementation Strategy has directed brownfield remediation work in that neighborhood. A brownfield is a vacant or underutilized site where the threat of contamination has made redevelopment more complex. Brownfields come in all shapes and sizes; common examples include old manufacturing or warehouse facilities, gas stations and dry cleaners. Some neighborhoods have higher concentrations of brownfields than others because of their industrial history. For example, the Park Hill Industrial Corridor includes approximately 1,400 acres of industrial land, including the city-owned 16-acre site at 11th and Hill, formerly owned by Rhodia, which is being actively marketed. The entire community benefits from returning underutilized properties in Park Hill and other older industrial areas to active use by reducing blight and vacancy, creating jobs and amenities, and reducing hazards to human health and the environment.

The city has received two rounds of Brownfield Assessment Grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and applied for a third, in order to continue the popular assessment program that has completed more than 30 assessments for petroleum and hazardous substances. And, the city was able to create a successful Revolving Loan Fund for brownfield cleanup with more than \$1.8 million available. In total, Louisville Metro Government has received just under \$4 million in grants to evaluate and clean up brownfields, as well as to create planning and economic strategies to support development in Park Hill and other areas of older industrial land with high concentrations of vacancy. Approximately 30 properties in Park Hill and other urban industrial corridors have been redeveloped as a result of assistance provided through the brownfields program. Providing assistance to companies interested in locating in older industrial areas can remove uncertainty and lead to positive redevelopment outcomes on properties that might otherwise continue to deteriorate.

The Department of Economic Development works with other departments of city government like the Office of Housing and Community Development and Public Works on quality of life and quality of place investments that drive economic development. The city was instrumental in attracting the new Kroger in Portland, and the First Choice Market in Park DuValle. Construction has begun on a major infrastructure improvement project on West Market Street, between 24th to 34th Streets and 38th to 40th Streets, to improve the business environment and commercial corridor. Consultants completed a similar corridor study in the Parkland neighborhood, and are about to embark on creating a full Neighborhood Plan for this historic neighborhood. The Department is working with Metro Council to prioritize recommended projects and identify funds for implementation.

Small businesses benefit from the MicroEnterprise Loan Program, and the popular METCO program, which has approved nearly 80 loans in West Louisville, creating more than 340 new jobs and leveraging \$20 million in private investment in the last 10 years. Examples of success in West Louisville include: Kentucky Peerless Distilling, Gelato Gilberto, Flavorman, Print Fulfillment Services, GQ Unlimited, Anderson Wood Products, and LAD Enterprises.

Since 2011, MicroEnterprise Loans have been made to 43 businesses representing an investment of \$282,000. In addition to loans, 155 individuals/business owners have completed training or participated in workshops offered by the MicroEnterprise Loan Program. Businesses assisted range from accredited child care to janitorial services to a recording studio. In the past year, 39 Shawnee residents graduated from the Power-Up Business class series, sponsored by Community Services. Additional funding for Microenterprise development is represented in the FY 15 budget as well continuation of the Power-Up Business classes and Exploring Self-Employment Workshops.

With all business attraction, expansion and retention activities now under direct city responsibility with Louisville Forward, the Department of Economic Development is even better poised to assist companies looking for financial assistance to do business. Louisville Forward and the Mayor's Office, in collaboration with state economic development staff, have been engaged with state legislators representing West Louisville to research best practices and begin discussion of possible incentives to support redevelopment activities and encourage private investments in West Louisville. Project managers already are repackaging currently available incentives to support targeted job creation and investment in West Louisville.

The best economic development activity is still education. In Louisville, if you have a four-year degree, there is functionally no unemployment (3.3% rate versus national average of 4.2%). But for those with no high school diploma, the unemployment rate is a whopping 20.4%. Education will drive the local economy. We have THREE jobs for every TWO people with a degree, and we have only TWO jobs for every THREE people who do not have a degree.

Built Environment

Louisville Metro has applied for the nine neighborhoods of West Louisville to be designated as a Promise Zone, a U.S. Housing and Urban Development designation of high-poverty, urban areas in need of jobs, private investment and coordination with federal agencies. The submitted plan looks at ongoing city efforts and presents a strategy to better coordinate revitalization resources. With this designation, Louisville would receive preferences for certain competitive federal programs and technical assistance, which could help us accelerate our efforts to revitalize West Louisville.

Louisville Forward, the city's economic and real estate development entity, also is researching other development and redevelopment authority structures to recommend best practices for how our work could contribute to such an entity, as recommended in the RKG report. A redevelopment authority supports business attraction, expansion and retention, as well as physical projects to improve the built environment. Such an entity would accelerate revitalization efforts. Current research also includes how Louisville Forward could support a variety of other initiatives and organizations, such as One West, which is primarily focused on physical surroundings and infrastructure where people live, work and play in West Louisville.

Housing

The Office of Housing and Community Development addresses housing affordability, availability and neighborhood development primarily through leveraging federal block grants to support renters, homeowners and homebuyers across Louisville Metro. The goal is to create choice housing with mixed price points, market rate and below, so that families can find and sustain affordable housing options in areas where they can thrive. The Office is currently overseeing several capital investments that will directly impact the residents of Shawnee, Russell, Portland and Parkland neighborhoods. Of the 36 housing and capital improvement projects currently in implementation, 45% are within West Louisville; other important projects areas include Smoketown and Cane Run.

The Louisville Metro Housing Authority announced in January of this year that it was awarded the \$425,000 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant for the redevelopment of 60 acres including the East Russell neighborhood and Beecher Terrace public housing development. While in the early stages, the grant will allow us to reimagine Beecher Terrace, and help break down the 9th Street divide with

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a potential new mixed-income neighborhood. The community partnership forming around this proposal holds great promise for a significant revitalization effort that, when combined with other efforts along 9th Street and the waterfront, can fundamentally alter the course of West Louisville.

Increased opportunities for family living and education occurred when Family Scholar House received low income tax credits, historic tax credits, and HOME Match funds and housing vouchers to restore, renovate and build 48 housing units at the former Maupin Elementary School, for single parents who are attending school full time. Maupin is a historic school in Parkland that was conveyed by the U.S. Attorney, to Family Scholar House following the failure of an attempt by the Shiloh Baptist Church to rehab the building. Metro was able to provide gap financing to help make the project work. The \$9 million project opened to residents in August 2013.

Louisville Metro worked with state and federal governments in securing funds for the renovation and rehabilitation of the African American Heritage Center, a cultural and community center highlighting the significant contributions of African Americans. This \$20 million project of saving an old and treasured building, the former trolley barns, embodies inspiration and will spur future investment in West Louisville.

The Shawnee and Portland neighborhoods have been designated by Louisville Metro, with approval of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas in an effort to target federal funding. The Portland neighborhood has received \$2 million to rehabilitate single-family houses and spur economic development. In the past two years, 63 houses have been rehabilitated, with 12 more to be completed in 2015. The Shawnee neighborhood has received \$1.2 million for housing repair, with an additional \$800,000 expected to be awarded over the next four years, with the goal to rehabilitate 115 houses. Six have been completed and 12 are under construction. As part of the Shine-On Shawnee initiative, an additional \$100,000 has been allocated for economic development efforts, including micro-lending and business development. Metro-wide housing rehabilitation services, including Lead Safe Louisville, Weatherization, Emergency Repair Program, and Kentucky Mortgage Settlement Funds, also are being targeted in Shawnee to leverage the impact of the NRSA investments. An additional \$200,000 has been allocated to a pilot project to incentivize home ownership in Shawnee, and as a result, Republic Bank has been working with Metro to develop a specific mortgage product that could be used in conjunction with this pilot. Additional infrastructure funding is being leveraged with other funds to improve streetscapes along the W. Market St. corridor and the 22nd and Bank Street intersection that will complement the work being administered by Economic Development.

Highlights of recent specific investments in West Louisville:

- Partnering with a private developer to create 40 new rental units in Russell and Shawnee – construction is underway;
- Partnering with the REBOUND Community Housing Development Organization for Homeownership to reclaim six units in the Shawnee Neighborhood;
- Investing in lead abatement and roof repair at Shawnee Gardens;
- Sidewalk and infrastructure improvements in the Shawnee, Portland and Russell Neighborhoods; these important investments stabilize housing and support economic development in the community;
- Partnering with New Directions to rehab two buildings holding seven housing units in Parkland;
- Partnering with the Louisville Central Community Center (LCCC) on renovations at their anchor institution on Muhammad Ali Boulevard;

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- Partnering with Family Scholar House to reclaim the historic old Maupin School and provide 48 new housing units in Parkland;
- Partnering with Louisville Urban League to update their HVAC system, roof and parking facilities;
- Reviewing proposals to build out the former Urban Renewal property at 16th and Cedar; Metro is currently investing in street, sidewalk, curb and lighting improvements to the area;
- Partnering with Louisville Metro Housing Authority, the recipient of a Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant that will include planning efforts for redevelopment of Beecher Terrace public housing and the Russell Neighborhood;
- Designing streetscape improvements in the Parkland Corridor; and
- Sidewalk improvements on Broadway, from 9th Street to 18th.

Vacant and Abandoned Properties (VAP)

Louisville Metro Government is spearheading efforts to reduce blight and abandonment through our Vacant and Abandoned Properties (VAP) initiative. Louisville Metro established an Innovation Delivery Team as part of our partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Metro has reorganized staff in multiple departments to systemically attack VAP issues from boarding/grass-cutting and demolition to code enforcement and foreclosure. Resources from local government, the federal government and the National Mortgage Settlement are being used to help Metro gain control of and transform vacant properties into marketable assets that support stable housing, entrepreneurship, education, entertainment and most importantly, economic development. Our goal is to facilitate strong neighborhoods by reducing blight and encouraging, attracting and assisting private and non-profit interests with their site assembly and redevelopment objectives. Over 150 blighted properties are currently pending in court foreclosure cases – all of which will be acquired by private or non-profit interests or the Louisville/Jefferson County Landbank Authority. Site control gives us an opportunity to better guide the rebuilding of neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by abandonment.

Louisville Metro has more than 4,500 properties identified as vacant or abandoned structures; the majority of these properties are located in West Louisville. The Mayor's Strategic Plan sets a goal of reducing the rate of abandonment by demolishing, foreclosing or otherwise acquiring blighted properties for redevelopment, Metrowide. Louisville Metro started the VAPStat program in 2013 to measure and report our progress on several key indicators and engage with the community about this critical issue in regular public forums – seven held to date with the most recent televised on MetroTV. The latest forum also is available on-demand at the city's website at louisvilleky.gov.

Reducing blight is our immediate priority, but we do so realizing that redevelopment is the only route to re-establishing vibrant neighborhoods. While Louisville Metro consistently invests its federal block grant funds in key neighborhoods, we also realize that private investment is essential to achieving the critical mass necessary to expand private capital and amenities to West Louisville. In 2013, Louisville Metro launched an interactive mapping platform with private sector partner Opportunity Space. The platform allows people from around the world to watch and observe public real estate holdings and follow priority projects from the visioning stage to reality. The recent "Lots of Possibilities" contest used Opportunity Space to attract and advise citizen developers on how to locate ideal sites, purchase property and implement more than 200 ideas for underutilized properties. As a result, six parcels were repurposed for housing, community meditation and market gardening in the Chickasaw and Parkland neighborhoods. Highlighting successful projects in West Louisville, including the Habitat for Humanity Headquarters in the Portland neighborhood or the

adaptive reuse of the historic Ouerbacher home in the Russell neighborhood demonstrates proof of concept and inspires others to join the movement.

Recognizing the large legal obstacles to reduce vacant and abandoned properties, Louisville Metro has worked with city partners across the state over the last four years to amend three (3) state laws inhibiting the rapid transition of vacant and abandoned properties to productive use. Those changes included giving local governments lien priority for abatement costs, requiring a mortgage holder to file a deed in lieu of foreclosure with the County Clerk within 30 days of the instrument's execution, and allowing courts greater authority to order sale of property more quickly. In 2014, the General Assembly passed legislation reducing the right of redemption period for properties purchased at commissioner's auction; successful bidders now have added protection for making property improvements, and responsible purchasers can recoup their investment.

To comprehensively address the rapid increase in vacant and abandoned properties due to the local and national foreclosure crisis, Louisville Metro commissioned and received the "Vacant and Abandoned Property Neighborhood Revitalization Study," completed by RKG Consultants in 2013. This comprehensive document recommends that the most efficient and productive approach to revitalize neighborhoods is to use data to prioritize where to concentrate Metro resources and concomitantly leverage private investment to supplement limited public dollars. RKG recommended that Louisville Metro identify and focus on up to three targeted geographic areas that are in transition, i.e., at a tipping point between stability and decline. As NRSAs, the Shawnee and Portland neighborhoods were early intervention targets, and Metro already has begun applying the recommendations of the RKG study to these areas.

Additionally, the RKG report draws a complete roadmap for Metro's neighborhood revitalization efforts through 19 early intervention recommendations with 86 action steps and 18 long term recommendations with 53 action steps. These recommendations fall into five (5) categories:

- Organizational structure and administrative action, including exploring the potential to merge the current powers of existing local government entities (Landbank, Vacant Property Review Commission, Urban Renewal Commission) into a single entity;
- Comprehensive neighborhood revitalization, planning and capacity building;
- Legislative changes to enhance the powers of the Landbank Authority, reduce the foreclosure redemption period, broaden the scope of the spot condemnation program, review and change the delinquent property tax process and implement a local vacant property registration program;
- Development of rehabilitation/demolition standards and soliciting key housing development partners; and
- Creation of the local funding sources necessary to accomplish the objectives laid out in the RKG report.

Per these recommendations, Metro is laying the groundwork to improve communications and coordination within Metro Government. One example relates to the governing bodies that are responsible for implementing policies related to blighted or underutilized properties. Beginning Spring 2015, the VAPStat public forums will be combined with the monthly business meetings for the Landbank Authority, Urban Renewal Commission and the Vacant Property Review Commission. Citizens will have the opportunity to hear the latest statistics on VAP initiatives while also observing each board or commission in formal business session. Another new development will involve coordination with Louisville Metro public safety agencies including Metro Police, Fire, EMA and Animal Services. For the first time in recent memory Metro will find ways to integrate public safety

data with case information on blighted properties. This cross-functional approach will assess vacant properties in relation to their impact on public safety and overall quality of life. The result will be a comprehensive and time-sensitive response to the highest priority VAP cases.

Sustain Louisville

The city's first comprehensive sustainability plan, Sustain Louisville, was released in March 2013 and identified citywide sustainability goals and initiatives under six focus areas: Energy, Environment, Transportation, Economy, Community and Engagement. The Office of Sustainability coordinates the city's priorities and actions relative to these goals through its mission to promote environmental conservation, the health, wellness and prosperity of our citizens and embed sustainability into the culture of the Louisville community.

Sustain Louisville uses a "triple bottom line approach," which recognizes the interconnectivity of people, prosperity and the planet. The objectives of Sustain Louisville incorporate this approach by promoting and prioritizing the social, economic and environmental sustainability facets in the Louisville community. Goals within the six focus areas seek to improve the livelihood and economic position of Louisville's citizens, as well as enhance and protect the natural environment. Two important sustainability projects that will impact future improvements in West Louisville are described below. Once complete, these two projects will provide a set of solutions that will benefit West Louisville, which is currently disproportionately represented in environmental data that directly impacts quality of life and health.

Urban Heat Island Assessment and Heat Management Plan

In 2013, the Office of Sustainability received grant funds from two local private foundations and from the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and its partner, the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, to perform a comprehensive urban heat island assessment and heat mitigation plan. The heat management plan will identify zones in the city most suitable for implementing heat mitigation strategies such as tree planting, white and green roofs and cool paving materials that will decrease the urban heat island effect. The study also will establish the city's urban heat baseline and will be used to inform city policy decisions and resource allocation. Preliminary heat maps show that areas in West Louisville are generally warmer than areas in the rest of the city. The forthcoming heat management plan will be a useful tool in identifying and prioritizing heat mitigation projects in West Louisville. The project consultant has completed three of six data set analyses that are necessary to complete the study, and is on target to complete the heat mitigation plan this summer. Upon completion, the city will develop an implementation plan for release at the end of the year.

Urban Tree Canopy Assessment

To effectively combat Louisville's serious urban heat island effect, it is important that the city fully understand the state of our tree canopy, as well as areas most and least affected. In 2014, a comprehensive tree canopy assessment project began that includes the following components:

- Relate the tree canopy to socio-demographic and economic data at the Louisville Metro Council District and Census Tract scales. Include descriptive statistics of residents including ethnicity, median and average income, education level, age and % renter and % homeowner.
- Relate the tree canopy to the provision of ecosystem services to society at the Council District and Census Tract scales. Ecosystem services shall include absorbing

rain water, energy conservation, carbon sequestration, heat island reduction and improvements to air and water quality and, where possible, a conversion to the dollar valuation.

- Locate areas of environmental need for tree cover and determine the potential tree canopy for those locations. These areas shall include neighborhoods in greatest need for reducing heat stress and locations where trees can most optimally reduce flooding.

The city is reviewing the draft urban tree canopy assessment data and anticipates sharing the findings with the community in March 2015. A citizens' "call to action" to help protect and grow the city's tree canopy also is being developed. Preliminary data shows that the tree canopy is lowest on the west and southwest areas of the city

The combined information gained from the Urban Heat Island and Urban Tree Canopy Assessment projects will be useful tools in identifying and prioritizing heat mitigation projects in West Louisville.

One Bright City

Clean and green neighborhoods are more desirable to live in, increase property values, and are more appealing for business attraction, expansion, and retention. All citizens are responsible for being good stewards of their environment. In spring 2014, Brightside, in partnership with Mayor Greg Fischer and all 26 members of the Louisville Metro Council, launched a new initiative, One Bright City that provides a structured framework to empower citizens to become long-term caretakers of their community.

One Bright City has three components:

- Community-Wide Cleanliness Index
- Tree Planting and Canopy Expansion
- Green Living

Brightside Community-Wide Cleanliness Index

The Brightside Community-Wide Cleanliness Index, which is performed in partnership with the Department of Public Works, includes a quarterly survey and reporting process that provides a baseline measurement of litter on Louisville's streets and sidewalks, in area parks and public spaces. The project tracks changes over time and allows citizens to collect and maintain data to drive decision-making, policy development and resource allocation. The Brightside Index is designed to serve as an awareness and accountability tool, with the goal of encouraging citizens, businesses and institutions to remove litter in their neighborhoods, which will stimulate new leaders, new solutions and new investments.

Between July and October 2014, Metro Council Districts 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 all improved in their cleanliness assessment, with an average score of 2.87, on a scale from 1, being no litter, to 4, being the most littered. The data collected by citizens directs the community volunteer groups in a more directed way of where to spend their efforts. Data is published by Brightside on its website at www.louisvilleky.gov/brightside.

Tree Planting and Canopy Expansion

Brightside performs multiple yearly plantings, including spring and fall. The planting events will be designed to accommodate approximately hundreds of community volunteers, planting

approximately hundreds of trees each time. As part of the Mayor's Strategic Plan, One Bright City contributed toward the 2014 goal of planting 5,000 trees throughout Louisville Metro. There were a total of 5,764 trees planted, 1,121 of which were in West Louisville.

Brightside introduced its first Community-Wide Native Planting Day in November 2014, during which nearly 300 trees were planted.

- **50 trees** planted in partnership with the Brown-Forman Legacy Tree Program utilizing Future Farmers of America Convention volunteers.
 - 22 trees planted on W. Kentucky between 26th Street and 28th Street
 - 28 trees planted on W. Ormsby between 16th Street and 17th Street
- **58 trees** planted through a UPS grant and a Keep America Beautiful grant in the neighborhood adjacent to Chickasaw Park with both community and UPS employee volunteers.

Green Living

Brightside and the Office of Sustainability partner on the Green Living portion of One Bright City, which educates individuals and households on how to live more sustainably and recognizes neighborhoods that achieve participation levels in green activities with a Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification. By participating in a tiered neighborhood certification program, Louisville's neighborhoods receive recognition for activities such as reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill, managing storm water on-site, conserving energy and growing produce. The education component will help residents achieve the criteria listed in the certification program. Overall, the program seeks to incentivize residents to conserve energy, increase residential recycling, eat healthier, local food and decrease the amount of rain water entering the combined sewer system.

One Bright City's Green Living program will be supported by an educational component to teach Louisville residents how to live more sustainably. A Green Living Toolkit and training materials are being developed that will include tips on energy conservation and waste reduction, and how-to information on topics such as planting and maintaining a garden, disconnecting downspouts, installing rain barrels, composting and recycling. This is a true grass roots effort to educate the community on core sustainable living practices.

Louisville Loop

West Louisville includes approximately 10 miles of the Louisville Loop, a 100-mile multi-use path that encircles the entire community, including the RiverWalk and the Southwestern and Algonquin Parkways connections to the Levee Trail in Southwest Louisville. The RiverWalk, originally dedicated in 1993, is one of the original shared-use paths of the city and is a key connection to many destinations in West Louisville. Beginning at the Louisville Wharf and western edge of Waterfront Park, approximately 7 miles of the Loop connects Downtown to Shawnee Park providing the community a first-hand glimpse of some of Louisville's most defining features such as the Ohio River Valley and the Olmsted-designed parks, Shawnee and Chickasaw. Connections to the Loop from the West Louisville neighborhoods provide opportunities for active and passive recreation as well as a safe and comfortable transportation option. Currently, there is a detour on the RiverWalk starting at Portland Wharf Park and ending in the vicinity of Shawnee Golf Course. This temporary closing has been due to bank erosion repairs and is currently being addressed through a partnership with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. An approximate 2-mile section of the Loop along Southwestern and Algonquin Parkways is under design with construction expected to begin in 2016. This section will

provide a protected and comfortable experience from Shawnee Park to the 41st Street access to the Levee Trail section of the Loop, as well as a future connection east along Algonquin Parkway.

Vision Louisville

All great cities should plan ahead. Vision Louisville is a community process to guide the future look, feel and flow of Louisville in the next 25 years. As one of hundreds of changing American cities, Louisville has an opportunity to learn from its past and present in order to shape its future. The Vision creates a strategic framework of major goals and specific projects that will shape the built environment throughout the entire community. Launched in 2012, Phase 1 provided a fresh perspective on Louisville and a look at global mega trends affecting our planning for the future, including important demographic data. Phase 2 was completed in late 2013 and focused on input from Louisville residents, who submitted more than 80,000 ideas for their dreams for Louisville.

The work of Phase 2 was led by community leaders who organized their work around seven focus areas: Economy, Living, Health, Connectivity, Creativity, Energy, and Identity. The results of the incredible public response have been organized into categories of Assets, Values, Goals and ultimately the Projects we want to pursue as a community. Thirty catalytic projects were identified and have been categorized into short-term (attainable in less than five years), mid-term (ten to fifteen years), and long-term (within twenty-five years). Louisville Metro's Office of Advanced Planning is leading the effort and will continue to work with committed community volunteers to establish implementation plans for these catalytic projects.

Louisville Metro in partnership with Living Cities developed a specific engagement tool called "VizLou" to reach millennial generation youth in disadvantaged areas of city, and most specifically in West Louisville to gain their insight for the Louisville of the future. VizLou was built on a Twitter platform that allows anyone with a smartphone to connect with the Vision Louisville initiative and contribute to the conversation. The tool reached thousands and connected youth through local groups, such as Youthbuild, NC3, and LouYouth. The YMCA will continue to use the VizLou platform for planning and community engagement with this targeted demographic.

Vision Louisville has identified several projects that will benefit West Louisville, and implementation plans are in process. Reimagining 9th Street, a major infrastructure redevelopment project, came out of the visioning process to redesign the wide concrete barrier of 9th Street into a beautiful hub of green space and public activity, new east-west connectivity and investment that would include moving the 9th Street ramp to/from I-64 several blocks to the west where there is more space for such a structure. The move of this structure also would create new space for the westward extension of Waterfront Park Phase IV and River Road, and it would allow two-way traffic on Main and Market Streets, providing greater connectivity between downtown and western neighborhoods.

A big idea generated from phase 2 of Vision included the development of a centralized food collection and distribution hub, which the city announced will take place at the former National Tobacco site. The West Louisville Food Port, in early planning stages, will provide urban farming, distribution and manufacturing of local food, access to fresh food and new jobs.

Louisville Metro applied for a federal TIGER planning grant to study the feasibility of these transformative ideas. While we did not receive the funding for FY15, we will continue to move forward with planning the extension of River Road, a master plan for re-envisioning 9th Street and initiating Waterfront Park Phase IV. In addition, we will continue to seek funding sources for the "Big Idea" initiatives.

Vision Louisville teams partnered with the Office of Vacant and Public Property Administration on the “Lots of Possibility” contest, to transform vacant lots from blight to beauty, which has resulted in renewed interest in making better use of our vacant lots. Through contest entries, we have collected many creative and valuable ideas of how to reuse vacant lots, as well as how Metro can better work with the public to make the process of acquiring property more transparent, efficient and affordable.

LIFT – accelerating growth of the built environment

Local Investments for Transformation (LIFT) is a proposal to amend Kentucky’s Constitution to allow citizens to vote on a temporary local option sales tax of no more than 1% dedicated for the funding of local capital projects. LIFT is about local control and economic development; it is a tool used by our competitor cities and 37 states to invest in projects that contribute to quality of life and fuel job growth. LIFT revenues could be used to build capital project such as parks, sidewalks, transportation (roads and mass transit), libraries, and health and wellness centers – whatever the people decide! By giving citizens the opportunity to vote on an additional 1% sales tax dedicated to specific projects, Louisville could accelerate transformative projects like the 9th Street and Muhammad Ali Corridors, Waterfront Park Phase IV, new public space and amenities, and enhance public transportation.

West Louisville – Today, Tomorrow, For the Generations

Looking ahead, the future can be bright for West Louisville. Its advantages are clear, but the challenges are great. The long, sad period of disinvestment and neglect that can trace its roots to the 1937 flood and discriminatory policies of the mid-20th century has ended. The tide is turning.

The deleterious activity and effects echoing from generations past will not subside immediately, but together, we will set a new course and achieve lasting prosperity for West Louisville. And together we must. Lasting change will occur only through the sustained and collaborative efforts of citizens, community leaders, non-profits, private investment and government leaders at all levels.